



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Study shows short-term stability in labour market

A new study by University of Canberra researchers, using Australian Bureau of Statistics data, shows a high degree of short-term stability in the Australian labour market.

From one month to the next, fewer than 3 per cent of Australians of working age changed their labour market state, that is, moved between full-time work, part-time work, looking for work and being out of the labour market.

When looked at over longer periods, however, the degree of stability was less. For example, over a year, about 20 per cent of people changed their labour market state and, over a three-year period, the figure rose to about 40 per cent.

The study, by Annie Carino-Abello, David Pederson and Anthony King from the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling at the University of Canberra, used data from the ABS Longitudinal Survey of Employment and Unemployment Patterns, which followed a group of respondents between September 1994 and September 1997.

Other findings showed that:

- The amount of change varied markedly with people's age and occupation. There was more movement between labour market states for young people and lower level occupations.
- The degree of movement was higher for females than for males. The pattern of labour market movement for males was dominated by moves into and out of full-time employment. The pattern for females showed large flows to and from part-time employment and in and out of the labour market, as well as flows into and out of full-time employment.
- Other factors also influenced the probability of someone changing their labour market state. The more significant were the time spent in a particular labour market state; being an employee or self-employed; having young children; having an employment handicap; and marital status.

Details are in **Labour Dynamics in Australia** (cat. no. 6293.0.00.006) available from ABS bookshops. The views expressed in this Occasional Paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the ABS. The summary of the study's main features are available on this site. If you wish to purchase a copy of the publication please contact the ABS Bookshop in your capital city.

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